

Message Text

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43

ACTION EA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9987

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USDEL JEC PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 13822

LIMDIS

DEPT PASS IMMEDIATELY TO IBS/NCA

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, VS

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT THIEU'S NOV 1 SPEECH

REF: A. SAIGON 13806; B. SAIGON 13813

1. IN REF A WE TRANSMITTED FULL TEXT OF PRES THIEU'S NOV 1
NATIONAL DAY ADDRESS. IN REF B WE SUMMARIZED THE SALIENT POINTS.

2. WE ARE WELL AWARE THAT THE EMPHASIS IN AMERICAN PRESS
TREATMENT OF THIS SPEECH WILL CONCENTRATE ON DESCRIBING IT AS
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A "HARD-LINING", "UNCOMPROMISING", "INFLEXIBLE", AND

"RABIDLY ANTI-COMMUNIST" PROUNOUNCEMENT, TOTALLY REJECTING ANY THOUGHT OF A "THIRD FORCE". THE TERM "THIRD FORCE" WILL BE USED, INCORRECTLY, INTERCHANGABLY DESCRIBED AS INCLUDING THE NON-COMMUNIST OPPOSITION, THE COMPONENT OF THE "NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND CONCORD" (PRESCRIBED UNDER THE PARIS AGREEMENTS TO BE CREATED AFTER RPT AFTER THE CEASEFIRE HAS ACTUALLY OCCURED AND DELIMITATION OF AREAS OF CONTROL HAVE BEEN AGREED UPON) AND FINALLY AS A COMPONENT OF A TRI-PARTITE COALITION GOVERNMENT ON THE LAOTIAN MODEL. WE ALSO EXPECT BOTH EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT PRESS STATEMENTS RECORDING THAT THE ACTIONS PRESIDENT THIEU HAS ALREADY TAKEN HAVE BEEN "FORCED" ON HIM. WE WILL ALSO SEE REPORTS THAT SUCH ACTIONS HAVE BEEN

"FORCED"ON HIM. WE WILL ALSO SEE REPORTS THAT SUCH ACTIONS HAVE BEEN CHARACTERIZED BY THIS OR THAT LEADER OF PRESENT DEMONSTRATION GROUPS AS "INADEQUATE", "INSUFFICIENT", "TOO LITTLE AND TOO LATE" AND, THEREFORE, UNACCEPTABLE TO THEM.

3. WE ARE ALSO AWARE, TO OUR REGRET, THAT WE WILL SOON BEGIN TO SEE, IN THE INTELLIGENCE SUMMARIES CIRCULATED WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT, THE REPLAY OF THIS KIND OF INSTANT ANALYSIS. WE HOPE, THEREFORE, THAT CAREFUL ATTENTION WILL BE GIVEN TO THE FOLLOWING COMMENT.

4. THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH WAS STRONG AND CONFIDENT, STRONGLY DELIVERED. HE HANDLED THE QUESTION OF CORRUPTION AND SOCIAL REFORM SKILLFULLY AND, IN CALLING ON POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS TO JOIN HIM IN THE TASK OF NATION BUILDING, HE WAS APPEALING FOR SUPPORT FROM THE RESPONSIBLE MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION. INDEED, HIS APPEAL IS PRIMARILY ADDRESSED TO THE RESPONSIBLE ELEMENTS OF THE SOCIETY AS A WHOLE. HIS REMARKS ABOUT CORRUPTION AND HIS INDIRECT REFERENCES TO THE ANTI-CORRUPTION MOVEMENT OF FR. THANH WERE WELL DESIGNED TO REMIND PEOPLE THAT THE RADICAL OPPOSITION LEADERS JUST MAY HAVE ULTERIOR MOTIVES. AND ALSO TO REMIND THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE THAT CORRUPTION IS AN EVIL THAT MUST BE COMBATTED IN EVERY PART OF SOCIETY NOT JUST IN GOVT ALONE. THIS WAS DESIGNED AS, AND COULD WELL BECOME, THE MOST IMPORTANT SINGLE THEME IN THE SPEECH. WHETHER IT WILL STRIKE THE SPARK
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THE PRESIDENT SEEKS REMAINS TO BE SEEN.

5. BOTH PRES THIEU, HIS CRITICS, AND THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE GENERALLY ARE PERFECTLY AWARE THAT CORRUPTION IS A WIDESPREAD SOCIAL PROBLEM ON WHICH REAL PROGRESS CAN BE MADE ONLY IF THE CONCERN EXPRESSED IS BROAD ENOUGH AND, EVEN THEN, ONLY OVER TIME AND WITH GREAT EFFORT. HIS CRITICS, HOWEVER, DISCUSS THE SUBJECT IN SHRILL, POLEMICAL TERMS

ATTEMPTING TO LAY THE BLAME FOR ALL CORRUPTION AT PRES THIEU'S FEET. THE PRESIDENT IN THIS SPEECH BRINGS THE DISCUSSION BACK TO REALITIES AND, HAVING MADE REAL AND MEANINGFUL MOVES HIMSELF TOWARD IMPROVING THE SITUATION WITHIN THE GOVT, NOW CALLS ON OPPOSITION LEADERS TO JOIN HIM IN THIS EFFORT TO ATTACK THE PROBLEM IN THE BROADER FRAMEWORK OF THE SOCIETY AS A WHOLE.

6. THE PRESIDENT'S STRONG STATEMENT DENOUNCING THE "THIRD FORCE" CONCEPT AND AGAIN POINTING TO COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN THE PROTEST MOVEMENTS WILL PROBABLY ANGER MANY OPPOSITION LEADERS AS DID SIMILAR STATEMENTS IN HIS OCT 1 SPEECH. WE ALSO CAN BE CERTAIN THAT THE INTERPRETATION GIVEN BY HANOI AND THE LEFTIST PRESS IN EUROPE AND ELSEWHERE WILL PORTRAY THESE REMARKS AS TOTALLY REJECTING ANY INTERNAL CONCILIATION WITH HIS OPPOSITION AND A REAFFIRMATION OF PRESIDENT THIEU'S DESIRE TO PRESS ON FOR A FINAL "MILITARY SOLUTION". SUCH COMMENT WILL IGNORE, AS WE SHOULD NOT, THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY TO REASSURE THE ARMY (ENGAGED AGAINST INCREASED MILITARY PRESSURE AND FORCED BY AMERICAN FAILURE TO KEEP THE COMMITMENT GIVEN AT TIME OF JAN 1973 AGREEMENTS TO INCREASINGLY SUBSTITUTE BODIES FOR THE MUNITIONS WE PROMISED BUT HAVE NOT PROVIDED) THAT IS LEADERSHIP STANDS DETERMINED NOT TO ACCED TO DEMANDS BY POLITICIANS WHICH COULD WEAKEN THE COUNTRY POLITICALLY IN ITS STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL.

7. WE SHOULD ALSO BE AWARE THAT THE REMARKS ON THE "THIRD FORCE" ARE ALSO INTENDED FOR US EARS IN THE SENSE THAT "THIRD FORCE" TO THIEU MEANS A COALITION GOVERNMENT IMPOSED FROM THE OUTSIDE. WATCHING THE LAOTIAN EXPERIENCE WHERE, WITH COMPLETE AMERICAN HONORING OF THE AGREEMENT AND THEREBY COMPLETE DISENGAGING, LEAVING LAOS

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COMPLETELY AT THE MCRCY OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE REGULARS WHO HAVE NEVER LEFT THE COUNTRY, THIEU IS SERVING NOTICE THAT NO SUCH SOLUTION IS POSSIBLE FOR SOUTH VIETNAM. EVEN IF THIEU DOES NOT WHOLLY BELIEVE THAT THIS IS IN THE BACK OF AMERICAN MINDS, HE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT MANY OF HIS SENIOR MILITARY COMMANDERS DO SO BELIEVE. AT THE SAME TIME HE IS USING THE ONLY LANGUAGE HIS SOLDIERS CAN UNDERSTAND. THIEU HAS PRIVATELY REITERATED HIS COMPLETE WILLINGNESS TO RESUME THE DIALOGUE WITH THE DRV/"PRG" SIDE IN PARIS AND IN THE TPJMC WHENEVER THEY ARE READY TO DO SO. HE IS PREPARED TO BE MORE THAN FORTHCOMING SHOULD THERE BE ANY INDICATION FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF A REAL DESIRE TO RECOMMENCE NEGOTIATIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE PARIS AGREEMENT.

8. WE SHOULD RECALL THAT HIS OCT 1 SPEECH WAS A BUST

AND THAT HE HAS NOT PERMITTED HIMSELF NOT TO
RECOGNIZE THAT FACT. WE SHOULD ALSO RECALL THAT AMPLE
POWER TO COMPLETELY REPRESS ANY UNACCEPTABLE DISSENT IS
HIS TO COMMAND. WE SHOULD NOT FALL INTO THE TRAP OF
ACCEPTING THIEU AS A CASE EXAMPLE OF THE CLASSIC MILITARY
LEADER WHO HAS SEIZED POWER AND RETAINS IT ONLY ON THE
BAYONETS OF HIS TROOPS. WE ARE AWARE THAT THE CONVENTIONAL
WISDOM, FED BY A PERVERSIVE PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN, USUALLY
ACCEPTS THIS CARICATURE. HE HAS DEVELOPED INTO AN
ACUTELY SENSITIVE POLITICAL ANIMAL WITH A BETTER
UNDERSTANDING OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL REACTIONS OF HIS OWN
PEOPLE THAN WE LIKELY TO FIND IN WASHINGTON.

9. THE ISOLATION HE HAD PERMITTED, AND BAD ADVICE
HE HAD BEEN RECEIVING FROM MHA AND HIS COTERIE OF
TECHNOCRATS, BECAME STARKLY APPARENT AS HE ASSESSED THE
REACTION TO HIS OCT 1 SPEECH. HE DECIDED TO LET THE
CURRENT DISSENT AND PROTEST RUN A CAREFULLY CONTROLLED COURSE
UNTIL THE NOV 1 NATIONAL DAY CEREMONIES AFFORDED THE
NEXT APPROPRIATE POINT FOR A NEW DEPARTURE. THESE OPEN
PRESSURES, MINISCULE IN REALITY AS COMPARED WITH THE PRESS
REPORTING, PROVIDED AN ADDITIONAL POLITICAL PROTECTION FOR A
MAJOR MOVE AGAINST CORRUPTION IN THE ARMY AND IN THE CIVIL
GOVERNMENT. IT WILL BE THE RARE WASHINGTON ANALYST WHO CAN
PRODUCE A PAPER WHEREIN HE PREDICTED EVEN AS LATE AS SIX WEEKS
AGO THAT GHIEU COULD HAVE DISMISSED THREE OF HIS MILITARY
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REGION COMMANDERS, SEVERAL HUNDRED LESSER MILITARY OFFICIALS,
AND EMERGE WITH HIS POSITION WITHIN THE RVNAF STRENGTHENED
RATHER THAN WEAKENED.

10. BOTH THIEU AND KHIEM HAVE RECOGNIZED FOR SOME TIME THAT THE
PACE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ESSENTIAL TO BE ACHIEVED WOULD BE
IMPOSSIBLE UNLESS CORRUPTION COULD BE GREATLY REDUCED. THEY
HAVE MADE SENSIBLE USE OF THE OPPORTUNITIES AFFORDED BY
THE PRESENT SPATE OF DISSENT AND PROTEST UNORGANIZED AND WITHOUT
COHESION OR MASS BACKING, AND WHICH THEY COULD HAVE STOPPED
AT ANY MOMENT BUT DID NOT.

11. THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH SHOULD BE READ AS A BEGINNING.
WHETHER WHAT IS BUILT ON THIS BEGINNING WILL BE
CONSTRUCTIVE, DEPENDS MORE ON DECISIONS TO BE MADE IN
WASHINGTON THAN ON THOSE TO BE MADE HERE.
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